November 28, 2019

1. Call to order 7:17 PM.
2. Roll call:
   1. In attendance: Joshua Quintana, Awet Tsegai, Melodie Wilson, John Cook, Timothy Siggia, Vincent Parys.
   2. Absent: David Whalen, Jim Shelmerdine
   3. Joshua Quintana was late so the vice chairman, Awet Tsegai, began the meeting until the chairperson arrived.
3. Approval of minutes: Motion was made by Timothy Siggia to approve minutes of the September 19th 2018 meeting and was seconded by Awet Tsegai. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.
4. Public Comment: none
5. Old Business
   1. Flag placements and Veteran’s Day Events. It was reported that the Veterans Day flag placement went well with a couple of high school students volunteering and a welcomed assistance of the Martin family.
   2. We have been approached by the Boy Scout troop in Ellington about our flag retirements for 2019. Further conversation will be held with them.
   3. It was discussed that we should continue with the current quantity when ordering flags for 2019. There are some flags left over from this year and they have been placed in storage in the loft above the last garage bay at the Street Department.
   4. Commissioner Parys has talked with Town Council Chairperson Kehoe about having a flag drop box at Town Hall for the public to drop off flags that need to be retired.
   5. The Fallen Star Memorial kickoff at Goodwin College was attended by Commissioners Cook, Tsegai, and Wilson. It is a very moving memorial that honor all Veterans. All Commissioners agreed that it warrants our support.
6. New Business
   1. Payment of bills: Commissioner Wilson was authorized to submit receipts for Veterans Day wreaths for reimbursement.
   2. Wreaths Across America is scheduled for 12:00 PM on December 15th. Students from O’Connell School have made arrangements for wreaths to be presented at the front, veterans’ section of Silver Lane Cemetery. Commissioners and Town leaders are encouraged to attend. Chairman Quintana will inform the Town Council. Commissioner Wilson will purchase additional wreaths for presentation at the Town’s 5 war memorials.
   3. The 2019 commission meeting schedule was discussed. The following motion was made by Commissioner Tsegai and seconded by Commission Wilson and passed unanimously by voice vote:
      1. “The commission will continue to meet the 3rd Wednesday of every month except July, August, and December. There will be no meetings during July and August. The meeting for December will be held on the 2nd Wednesday.” A list of meeting dates is attached to these minutes.
   4. Budget for 2019. Commissioner Wilson shared preliminary budget information with the commission. Additional budget information will be available for our December meeting.
   5. Events for 2019. The Commission discussed the following:
      1. Memorial Day
         1. Flag placements at town cemeteries Saturday, May 18, 2019.
         2. Memorial Service honoring our Gold Star Honor Roll at Bicentennial Park on Sunday, May 26, 2019.
         3. Memorial Day parade on Monday, May 27, 2019.
      2. Veterans Day
         1. Flag placements at town cemeteries Saturday, November 2, 2019.
         2. Memorial service at Hillside Cemetery with presentation of wreath Monday, November 11, 2019.
      3. It is the goal of the commission to actively promote our events with the Town leaders and to encourage their participation.
7. Open floor:
   1. East Hartford Veterans’ Officer Nominations. Discussion on this was again tabled in our October meeting until it is clarified. Joshua Quintana that he has not yet discussed this with the town attorney to clarify the ambiguity in the Town Ordinances between the Mayor appointing a town employee and the Veterans Commission electing a member but will do so and will report back to the commission.
   2. New Projects: There has been positive feedback on Commissioner Cook’s recommendation to establish a program for high school seniors, including seniors from CIBA and Pathways, to write a biography of a person listed on the Gold Star Memorial list and to award the student with the best biography with a small scholarship award of either $500 or $250 out of our budget. Chairman Quintana has not been able to discuss with the town attorney however, he suggests that we do it as an award instead of a scholarship. The commission agreed to allocate $500 for this award and will contact the schools to implement the program. The rules of the program will be decided later however, there will only be one awarded annually on a competitive basis and arrangements will be made to archived all biographies at the Town Library.
   3. Commissioner Quintana suggested that we plan an event for 2019 to read the names of fallen WWI residents to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the official end of WWI. Commission Cook said he would research and report back to the commission what is the official date.
8. Public Act No. 17-65; AN ACT CONCERNING A MUNICIPAL OPTION PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR GOLD STAR PARENTS AND SPOUSES. The East Hartford Veterans Commission supports the enactment of ordnances that would enable Gold Star Parents and Spouses to the tax exemptions authorized now by State Statutes. Commission Siggia will make a presentation to the Town Council about this statute that was passed in 2018 and to voice our unanimous support that East Hartford join other towns and cities in offering this to our eligible Gold Star Families.
9. Adjournment: Motion was made by John Cook to adjourned at 8:49 PM. The motion was seconded by Awet Tsegai and was passed by unanimous voice vote.

Submitted by:

Commissioner John Cook

Meeting Dates for 2019

**January 16, 2019**

**February 20, 2019**

**March 20, 2019**

**April 17, 2019**

**May 15, 2019**

**June 19, 2019**

**September 18, 2019**

**October 16, 2019**

**November 20, 2019**

**December 11, 2019**